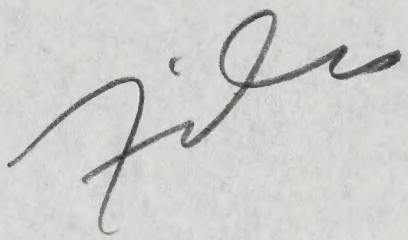
INTERRUPTIONS UNLIMITED



A satirical farce on the conditions under which the Short Story Course has to proceed at a well known Alberta Summer School.

by

Maxine E. Sutherland

TIME

AFTERNOON OF A CHILLY SUMMER DAY IN JULY.

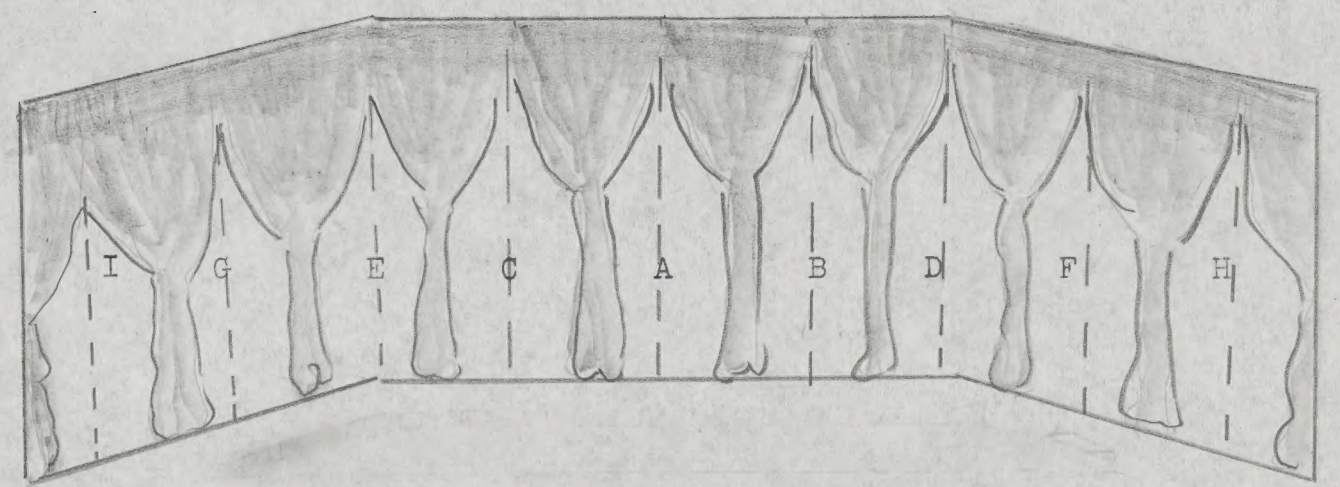
PLACE

A RESORT TOWN IN ALBERTA WHERE THE SCHOOL IS LOCATED.

SETTING

A CLASSROOM WHERE THE SHORT STORY COURSE IS CONDUCTED.

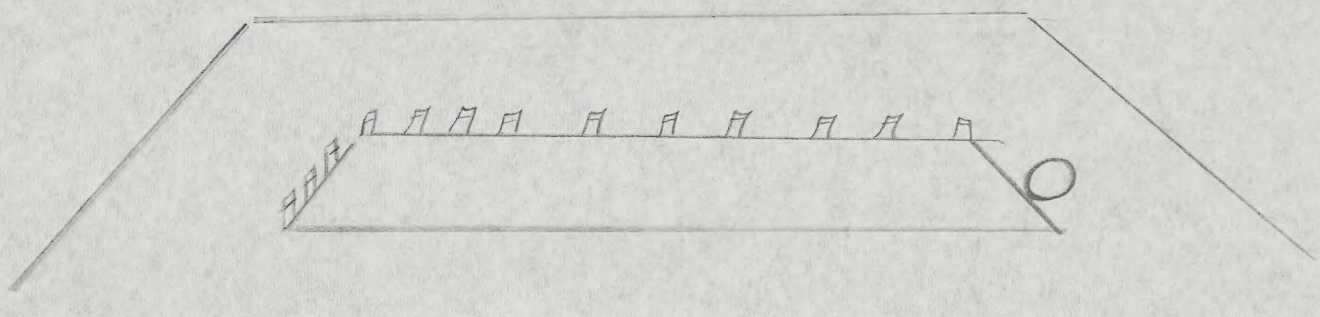
STAGE SETTING



A dark curtain is draped into doorways against a neutral curtain. The neutral curtain must have slits to allow the entrances of those who bring the interruptions. The doorways in the black curtain must be arranged so that they may be opened and closed at will, on the scene.

Alternative.

FLOOR PLAN



There is a long narrow table across the length of the stage. There are thirteen chairs around this table as shown in the diagram. At the head of the table is a large armchair. The stage is draped for entrances as shown on the previous page. There is no other furniture. This is supposed to suggest the class room.

LIST OF PROPERTIES

TWO Small dogs on a twin leash

a pile of manuscripts

some separate manuscripts for the students

notebooks for each student

a large white handkerchief for a man

note or bill book for man from the typewriter Co.

letter for messenger boy

a book

fifteen name cards

a stack of letters for the mail

a sheaf of papers for the director

THOSE WHO CAUSE THE INTERRUPTIONS in the order of their ~~appear~~ appearance.

THE GIRL WHO WAS ALWAYS LATE. "B"

MESSENGER BOY WITH A LETTER. "C"

MAN FROM THE TYPEWRITER COMPANY."D"

THE GIRL WHO LOST HER PURSE."E"

A STUDENT LOOKING FOR THE PLACE OF REHEARSAL."F"

THE WOMAN WITH THE TWIN DOGS."G"

THE STUDENT WHO WANTS THE ADDRESS OF THE TEXT BOOK."H"

DIRECTOR OF THE SCHOOL."I"

The letter indicatesthe places of entrance.

CHARACTERS

MR HARD the instructor for the Short Story Class.

STUDENTS:

THE NATURAL SPOKESMAN FOR THE CLASS

THE GIRL WHO WAS ALWAYS LATE

THE WOMAN WITH THE TWIN DOGS

THE GIRL WHO WAS ALWAYS LATE

THE BRIGHT GIRL WITH THE RED COAT

THE ONE WHO KNEW SHE SHOULD GO BACK TO HER KNITTING

THE ONE WHO DIDN'T KNOW THAT SHE SHOULD GO BACK TO HER KNITTING.

THE LADY WHO WAS THERE ON A HOLIDAY WITH HER FAMILY

THE BOY WHO ALWAYS HAD TO RUSH AWAY TO WRITE AN ORAL FRENCH EXAM.

THE NERVOUS LITTLE LADY WHO HAD HAD A SCHOLARLY GRANDFATHER.

ONE WHO REALLY WORKED HARD.

THE QUIET LADY WITH THE DARK EYES.

THE ONE WHO LEFT THE CLASS AND NEVER CAME BACK.

THE GIRL WHO WAS INTERESTED MAINLY IN THE AIR FORCE.

SETTING

there is a large card top of the curtain centre back which says"CLASS ROOM OF THE SHORT STORY COURSE" There is a sign for each one of the characters on the back of their respective chairs.The signs are as the list of characters.The Director of the School has a sign to that effect.It is not necessary for the other Interruptions to have signs,their words and actions are self explanatory.

AS THE SCENE OPENS there is no one on the stage.Immediately Professor Hard walks in entrance "A" and goes to the chair at the head of the table and sits down and commences to look over the stack of manuscripts.He looks as though he were pinched with the cold and shivers as he leafs through the MSS.There is a noise overhead as from a hundred people doing an energetic folk dance.As this is going on the Class enter at A and go to their respective seats.They all glance ceiling ward and pantomime annoyance at the noise overhead.Just as they are all seated it stops.

MR HARD

looking towrds the ceiling

Do any of you happen to know what goes on up their?

THE NATURAL SPOKESMAN

brightly

I think they do the folk dancing practice there,sir.

MR HARD doesn't look as though this information brought him any consolation.He is about to commence the class when the sound of a very loud trumpet comes from somewhere in the building.

MR HARD

getting up from his chair and pushing it in to the table

I don't know about you foks but I can't stand that!

CURTAIN "A" OPENS AND HE MARCHES OFF FOR A FEW MINUTES.

As the class laugh and talk the trumpet suddenly ceases.

as Mr Hard re-enters they are quiet again.

MR HARD

6~~6~~noyed into rather violent expression

Might as well be in a gol-darn circus!

picks up some MSS and glances at the class And in a calmer tone

This is beyond a doubt the coldest and the noisest room in the world.

continues resignedly

Well what does anyone know about Short Story?

There are various self conscious gestures on the part of the class but no one attempts an answer.

NATURAL SPOKESMAN

Please,sir,I don't think we know anything about Short Story.

The rest all look relieved that some one has said something and it hasn't had to be them.In this relief they do not catch the purport of what has been said.

MR HARD

Although it isn't polite for me to say so I agree with you.

he laughs and the class joins in faintly not HAVIng fully caught on.

THE LADY WHO LEFT GETS UP AND GOES OUT THE DOOR THROUGH WHICH THE STUDENTS ENTERED.IT CLOSES AGAIN AFTER HER.

MR HARD

MR HARD

I don't know but what she's the wisest of us all.

THE NERVOUS LITTLE LADY WITH THE SCHOLARLY GRANDFATHER

Mr Hard on my manuscript you say that I am lacking in back ground.Just what do you mean?

Mr HARD

Well a writer of all people has to read.Then he needs to read some more and after that he can start in ~~adn~~ and read again.

THE NERVOUS LITTLE LADY WITH THE SCHOLARLY GRANDFATHER

I always thought that I had a good background.My grandfather was agreat scholar

MR HARD

You have a very nice literary style but your grandfather's background will hardly serve for you.I'd advise you to read all you can.I think that on the whole you've written a very good story here.Do another rewrite and ~~send~~ bring it in to me.

~~At~~ ~~n~~ ~~T~~ THIS MOMENT THE GIRL WHO IS ALWAYS LATE ENTERS FROM " B"AND GOES TO HER CHAIR.Curtain closes that entrance.

MR HARD

hands her a manuscript ~~The~~

They say that spelling and punctuation and paragraphing and sentence structure doesn't count but I don't know, I think it does.Try to improve yours eh?

DOOR C THERE ENTERS THE GIRL FROM THE OFFICE she hands

MR HARD a stack of letters and smiles in her best manner

I thought that you might like your mail.

MR HARD murmurs a doubtful thanks and puts the letters down and goes/~~to/the~~on with the class again.

THE BRIGHT GIRL IN THE RED COAT has her hand up

MR HARD

TO her

Yes.

THE BRIGHT GIRL IN THE RED COAT

Please,sir,would you help me with Injun Joe?

CLASS LAUGH

THE BRIGHT GIRL IN THE RED COAT

He's in my story.

MR HARD

I gathered that.Have you got your story with you?

BRIGHT GIRL IN THE RED COAT brings him a manuscript.HE continues

I'll look this over for you by to-morrow.

MESSENGER BOY APPEARS AT "C" WITH A LETTER IN HIS HAND AND ANNOUNCES

A letter for the girl who is interested in the Air Force.

THE GIRL WHO IS INTERESTED IN THE AIR FORCE JUMPS UP TO RUN FO FOR THE LETTER.MESSENGER LOOKS ARCUND AND LEAVES.SHE GOES BACK TO THE TABLE AND COMMENCES TO READ THE LETTER ~~AS THE~~

AS CLASS CONTINUES.THE ENTRANCE CLOSES~~AT~~ AT C.

THE QUIET LADY WITH THE DARK EYES

Have you read my manuscript,Mr Hard?

MR HARD

searches through the manuscript pile and hands her one

That was a very good attempt. Do a re-write and bring it in to-morrow.Who's next with a comment or a suggestion?

THE LADY WHO IS ON A HOLIDAY WITH HER FAMILY

MR Hard I'm here with my family on a holiday so I can't get any writing done but I will when I go home.

THE MAN FROM THE TYPEWRITER COMPANY APPEARS WITH A PAD IN HIS HAND.He come IN ENTRANCE "D".

~~Does~~/Is this Mr Hard's classroom? goes over without waiting holds out the b okTO THE PROFESSOR Will you just sign here.

TO GET RID OF HIM THE PROFESSOR SIGNS.AS THE MAN LEAVES THE ENTRANCE "D" CLOSES DOWN.THE PROFESSOR SIGHS AND RETURNS TO THE CLASS AGAIN.

The one who knows that she should go back to her knitting speaks

THE ONE WHO KNOWS THAT SHE SHOULD GO BACK TO HER KNITTING

Mr Hard I enjoy the class very much and I have found out one very beneficial thing.I have no imagination.I am glad I know that .Now I'll be content to go back to my knitting.

MR HARD

Well, now you know, I wouldn't like to tell anybody that they would never write. You may be able to generate some imagination sometime. I wouldn't quit trying entirely.

THE GIRL WHO HAS LOST HER PURSE ENTER "E"

Excuse me, I think I left a purse in here. May I look around?

MR HARD

with resignation

Surely. Go right ahead.

THE GIRL WHO HAS LOST HER PURSE SEARCHES by looking under the table and making everyone stand while she looks on the sea seats. She looks at the professor sitting as if she was about t to ask him to move but thinks better of it and goes out looking back not satisfied that the purse isn't somewhere around. When she goes the entrance E closes after her.

THE ONE WHO REALLY WORKS HARD GETS OUT A COUPLE OF MSS AND PASSES THEM UP TO THE PROFESSOR.

MR HARD

Ah, I see we really have some work coming in today. The way to learn to write you know is to write and after that re-write.

A STUDENT LOOKING FOR THE ROOM IN WHICH THERE IS TO BE A REHEARSAL ENTERS ENTRANCE "F"

Excuse me, but is this the room where the are rehearsing "Death takes a holiday?"

CHORUS ..No

HE GOES OUT AND THE ENTRANCE "F"CLOSES DOWN.

MR HARD

I'm glad that Death can have a holiday even if we can't

THE ONE WHO DOESN'T KNOW THAT SHE SHOULD GO BACK TO HER KNITTING.

I tried another story last night.I think it is a little bit better than my other attempts .Have you time to read it sir?

BEFORE THE PROFESSOR CAN ANSWER THE ENTRANCE "G" IS FILLED WITH THE WOMAN WITH THE TWIN DOGS.

I must apologize Professor but I just got back from Calgary with my boys.the boys bark and make a mock dash in the direction of the professor's chair.There might be a shade of mild disapproval in the professor's voice as he says

Come in .We have still some time left.

THE WOMAN WITH THE TWIN DOGS GOES TO HER PLACE WHILE THE DOGS RANGE AROUND THE LENGTH OF THE LEASH.

MR HARD

to the ONE WHO DOESN'T KNOW THAT SH SHOULD GO BACK TO HER KNITTING

Did you say that you wanted me to read your manuscript?

THE ONE hands him her manuscript.He leafs through it to the length commences to read

A Stitch In Timestops What about that for a title?

NO ANSWER FROM THE CLASS You people should try to get title conscious. goes on with the reading

'Johnny was eating steak in the Club Cafe when the bar tender at the Crown Hotel leaned over and asked himwhy he ~~wasn~~ wasn't having a drink.At that moment a truck headed down Maitland Street smashed into a truck headed down Main.A hearse was leaving the funeral parlors of Jones and Smith and Johnny was dancing with the girl in the red dress at Jimmie's dance hall.(the professor looks up) Do I happen to have two stories here?

THE ONE WHO SHOULD GO BACK TO HER KNITTING

No.

MR HARD

I seem a bit confused.How about the rest of you?

BEFORE THEY CAN ANSWER THE "H" ENTRANCE FRAMES THE STUDENT WHO CAN'T ATTEND BUT WANTS TO BUY THE TEXT BOOK USED.

Excuse me but they said in the Office to come right in. I am interested in Short Story writing but I can't stay to attend the course.Would you mind letting me have the name o of the text you use?

MR HARD

picking up a book from the table

This is it right here.

SHE GOES OUT WITH THE BOOK AND THE ENTRANCE " H" CLOSES AFTER HER.

MR HARD

Now where were we?

THE DIRECTOR OF THE SUMMER SCHOOL APPEARS IN THE "I" ENTRANCE

announcing in a loud voice,accompanied by his most engaging smile

Everybody out for a picture the photographer is waiting.

ALL THE CLASS RUSH OUT

DIRECTOR STILL IN THE ENTRANCE"I"

You too,Professor.He goes off and curtain falls over the entrance

THE PROFESSOR STARTS TO GO THEN HE RETURNS TO THE PILE OF MSS.HE LOOKS AROUND WITH SATISFACTION TO SEE THAT HE IS ALONE AND UNINTERRUPTED AT LAST.

They won't miss me I'll get at these MSS for tomorrow's class.

JUST AS HE SETTLES AT THEM THE NOISE ABOVE RECOMMENCES;THE TRUMPE THE SCUFFLING FEET,ALL LOUDER THAN EVER BUT HE SHRINKS DETERMINED OVER THE MSS.HIGHER AND HIGHER MOUNTS THE NOISE AND THE DOORS OR CURTAINS ALL OPEN TO REVEAL THE DIRECTOR AND EACH MEMBER OF THE CLASS BACK TO THE ENTRANCES CHANTING:

We won't take the picture without you...We won't take the picture without you.

INDESPAIR THE PROFESSOR JUMPS UP AND COMMENCES TO TEAR AND THROW THE MSS AROUND THE STAGE WHILE THE OTHERS RUSH AT HIM FROM ALL THE ENTRANCES AS IF TOPREVENT HIM.ALL THE WHILE THE NOISE HAS MOUNTED SO THAT WHAT ANYONE SAYS IS NOT DISCERNABLEBUT THEIR IS W WILD ACTION ON THE PART OF THE PROFESSOR WITH THE MSS AND SHRIEKS FROM THE CLASS AND DIRECTOR AS THEY RUNTO PREVENT HIS ACTIONS.

CURTAIN.